

BRICA(Bronx Regional Interagency Council, Bronx, New York)
“Who Are You Calling Old? Serving the Baby Boomers in 2015”, February 8th, 2005. Mini – Conference, Professor Joanna Mellor, Assistant Professor, Wurtzweiler School of Social Work, Yeshiva University.

Notes for WHCoA report

Summary of Presentation

The genesis and history of Project 2015 in NYS was described.

Once the Baby Boom generation reaches old age, the numbers of older persons in NYS will grow dramatically. A common concern of the lack of preparation to meet the challenges of this demographic shift resulted in a partnership between the NYS Office for Aging (SOFA) and the State Society on Aging (SSA) of NY. Project 2015, now in its third phase, was initiated in 1999.

Phase I: While SSA members developed background papers and briefs on a variety of issues and content areas that will be impacted by the growth in older persons, SOFA staff produced statistics and data on the current and future older populations of NYS. Open forums were held throughout the state re planning for the future.

Phase II: Governor Pataki directed all state departments and units to plan and develop action strategies. Representatives of each department met under the leadership of SOFA for one year, resulting in a publication, detailing plans and action strategies.

Phase III: Currently underway, Project 2015 is being brought to the community level with public and private agencies planning together for tomorrow's elderly.

Overarching themes in all of Project 2015 activities are diversity, the role of technology, and intergenerational issues and programs. While the concerns and service needs of tomorrow's older population is of interest, equal attention is given to the benefits afforded NYS by its aging population and plans for providing opportunities and utilizing the wisdom, time and leadership of older persons.

First priority: The importance of the aging network and other public and private entities and organizations collaborating in planning ahead to meet the needs and harness the benefits that the larger older population of Baby Boomers will bring to society.

Barriers: Existing lack of collaboration between organizations and fragmentation of services due to lack of time, scarce resources, and paucity of administrative/executive support.

Recommendations:

AoA mandates all State and Triple AAAs to connect with local public and private organizations to focus on planning for the future older population..

Support this process through the provision of kits/templates to activate collaborative planning. The experience of NYS and other states which have initiated planning projects might be utilized here.

Senate Special Committee on Aging holds public hearings on Project 2015.

AoA secures a place on the agenda of the annual meeting of State Governors for the purpose of introducing and promoting Project 2015 planning.

AoA provides public recognition of planning and action strategies that are replicable elsewhere.

Submitted by M. Joanna Mellor
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